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ABSTRACT

The goals of this telecommunications project are for students to: (1) gain a better understanding about the world and its people by communication with other students from other countries; (2) learn to use telecommunications for electronic mail and online research; (3) use higher-level thinking skills in preparing research papers and presentations; and (4) learn the importance of teamwork in accomplishing a task. The project involved teachers sending a message to the listserv KIDLINK which asked other countries to participate in a "key-pals" program. Participating countries included: South Africa; Norway; Finland; Denmark; Peru; Russia; Estonia; Chile; Mexico; England; Iceland; Germany; and Canada. Groups of students selected a participating country, composed messages off-line and then uploaded their messages to their foreign computer friends using the Texas Education Network (TENET). They used the communications as part of their research into that particular country. Highlights include the guidelines used for conducting this project; guidelines for establishing effective electronic communication; information on designing online projects; how to join the KIDLINK and Intercultural E-mail Classroom Connections (IECC) listservs; examples of actual electronic intercultural communications; a copy of the student message log; and recommended questions to ask computer pals. (MAS)

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ED 378 957

THE WORLD

AT OUR FINGERTIPS

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THE WORLD AT OUR FINGERTIPS

SYNOPSIS OF TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROJECT

GOALS OF PROJECT:

1. Students will gain a better understanding about the world and its people by communicating with other students all over the world.

2. Students will learn to use telecommunications for electronic messaging and on-line research.

3. Students will use higher-level thinking skills in preparing research paper and presentation.

4. Students will learn the importance of teamwork in accomplishing a task.

SYNOPSIS:

1. Teacher subscribed to KIDLINK and sent a general message to the LISTSERV explaining the proposed project, ages of students, general expectations, and various other details. Answers were received from many teachers from around the world indicating interest in the proposal. Also, some of the people that were in this project last year continued to work with students this year. The participating countries are: South Africa, Norway (2 different locations), Finland (2 different locations), Denmark (2 different locations), Peru, Russia (2 different locations), Estonia, Chile, Mexico, England, Iceland (2 different locations), Germany, and Canada (3 different locations).

2. After explaining the project to the students, students were very excited and eager to begin messaging their "key-pals." The students selected a country from a list prepared by the teacher and divided themselves into groups containing three students.

3. Students were taught how to compose messages "off-line" and then "up-load" their message to their electronic computer pals using TENET. Students were encouraged to ask questions about the foreign country and the students. They wanted to know what it must be like to live in that country. BHS students have been very willing to share information about Texas and what it is like to live in Burleson.

4. A plastic crate with hanging file folders with a label for each country and class period was put in the classroom to store the messages and other related material. Also, a world map with red flags indicating the countries involved and tags with the students' names were put on the classroom wall. A globe and a world atlas were also used to familiarize the students with their "adopted" country.

5. As the messages began to come in, the students were very thrilled! "Checking the mail" (looking at their file folder) is the first thing that most students do as they enter the classroom. (A student prints out the mail each day and files it.) Students like sharing their letters with other classmates and much discussion is enjoyed during the first few minutes of the class period.

6. A picture was taken of each group holding a sign that said BURLESON, TEXAS and each student was holding a sign with their name on it. The picture, along with a travel magazine about Texas (obtained free by each group by calling 1-800-888-8TEX), a brochure about Burleson, school newspapers, Texas postcards, individual notes from my students, other snapshots furnished by the students and a cassette tape made by my students with a "hello" message and some of the students' favorite songs were included in a package sent to their new friends. Extra credit points were given to the students for mailing these packages. Several packages have been received from the foreign countries by my students also.

7. GUIDELINE FOR RESEARCH PROJECT handout was given to students, detailing exactly what was required from the project. Students were expected to e-mail their key-pals at least once every two weeks. A "cc" copy was mailed to me so that I could monitor the messaging. My students messages were also printed out and filed so that they could keep track of the information exchange. Extra credit points were given for each message uploaded.

Required Resources:

a. On-line data research using TENET and/or Prodigy.
b. PCGLOBE, a world atlas software.
c. "Countries of the World CD-ROM disk.
d. ENCARTA Encyclopedia CD-ROM disk.
e. Information received from the students in the foreign countries.
f. Book(s) containing information about the country.

Optional Resources:

a. Startext, a local telecommunications service.
b. Material obtained from the Tourist Board of foreign country.
(A database with the Tourist Boards' addresses was merged with a letter written to request information about the various countries. Travel posters, pictures, other information were received by most of the groups from the Tourist Boards of the countries.)
c. Interviews with people who either are from that country or have traveled in that country.
d. Information received from local travel agencies.
e. Other resources.

8. Items to be included in research paper:

a. Cover page with graphics representing their country prepared with Microsoft Publisher.
b. Formal title page.
c. Body of document, which must include the following:
Introduction, history of country, natural resources, political and governmental bodies, economy, education, data about the people and summary paragraph.
d. Reference page with at least five sources. (A display in the classroom gives examples of the format for the paper.)

9. Optional items could be included for extra credit, such as manufacturing, transportation, communication, land, climate, cultural life, tourist attractions, etc.

10. Each group must prepare a poster board with various data, charts, flag, art work, etc. and a 10-15 minute presentation to the class about their country and their key-pals. Originality and creativeness are encouraged. Students are required to describe what a "day in the life" of a teenager living in that country would be like (from information received from key-pals) and how it compares to a typical day in Burleson. Students are also required to teach at least five important and interesting facts about their country to their classmates in such a way that the class will remember the information. Suggestions given for extra credit were videos, costumes, ethic items, food, music, and folklore native to the country, etc. Extra credit was given based upon the amount of preparation done by the group.

12. A grading checklist with required and optional elements and points was given to each group. An individual rating checklist was given so that each student could rate the amount of work performed by the other members of the group.

The Microcomputer Applications computer lab has 20 MS-DOS 486/33 multi-media machines with 245 MB hard drives and two 14,400 BAUD modems. Each class has 20 students.

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GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE

ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION

* Keep effective communication as your overall goal.

* Choose the right communication tool: telephone, electronic mail, bulletin board, posted mail, interoffice mail, fax, in person, etc.

* Be concise.

* Organize your thoughts.

* Never forget a human being is on the other end.

* Ask for clarification before jumping to conclusions. Perhaps that seemingly outrageous message was meant to be funny or to convey a completely different idea.

* Do not send mail or post a notice when angry or upset.

* For the main body of your text, use lines less than 60 characters long because they are easier for the eye to follow.

* Use uppercase sparingly because it is more difficult to read and is needed for emphasis. Many readers consider capital letters the electronic equivalent of SHOUTING.

* Use subheading (all caps in fine) and lists to break up the text.

* If you are attempting sarcasm or other humor, clearly indicate so. A common convention is to place a smiley face icon at the end of non-serious passages. Tilt your head to the left to view the following example :)

* Reading text on a person's computer screen without invitation is like reading papers lying on their desk or in their hand. A computer screen may look like a television set but it isn't.

MAIL GUIDELINES

* Send a different message for each topic of discussion. The REPLY command is a convenient way to send an answer, but when changing topics, use the SEND command so you can change the subject title.

* Use descriptive titles on the Subject line so that messages are easier to file and retrieve.

* When responding to a message, give some indication as to the content of the original message. Have you ever received a reply that just said "OK"? OK what? Why not, "OK, I can come next Wednesday." A good defense for the original author is to write a descriptive Subject line.

BULLETIN BOARD GUIDELINES

* Only post messages of general interest. If you can exchange the same information by email, then it is probably not of general interest.

* Clearly label the source of unoriginal text at the beginning of the passage.

* Post a different notice for each topic of discussion.

* Post a message to only one category, not several. Although people may read categories selectively, others are inconvenience when they see the same message more than once.

* When responding to a posting, read through all of the replies first to see if someone has already said what you wanted to.

* When responding to a posting, summarize the original posting so that your readers understand the context. If you choose to include the original posting itself, delete all but the passages relevant to your point. Keep it as short as possible.

* If you feel obligated to correct a posting's grammar or spelling, do so through a discreet mail message to the author--not through a reply on the bulletin board.

* Do not post anything that you would regret saying in a room full of people.

Source: Sue Gier, CCNEWS

HOW TO DESIGN AN ONLINE PROJECT THAT WORKS

GUIDELINES TO ASSURE ONLINE SUCCESS

I. **Clearly identify goals, tasks, and outcomes.**

II. **Design your project to "reward" participants.**

III. **Set firm beginning and ending dates and clear deadlines.**

IV. **Make your plans early and announce them early.**

V. **Create a "Call for Collaboration" and post it on the listserv of your choice to announce your project.**

VI. **Give specific information about your project: goals, objectives, location, grade levels desired, contact person, timeline, deadlines, activities, etc.**

VII. **Share the results with all participants.**

VIII. **Evaluate success of project.**

HOW TO JOIN
KIDLINK LISTSERV

Use the Electronic Mail section on TENET:

EXAMPLE OF MESSAGE:

PINE 3.03 COMPOSE MESSAGE

TO : LISTSERV@vm1.nodak.edu
Cc : (your e-mail address)
Attchmnt:
Subject :
------- Message Text --------
SUB KIDLEADR <your-first-name> <your-last-name>
SUB KIDLINK <your-first-name> <your-last-name>
GET KIDLINK TIPS
GET KIDLINK GENERAL

The following are sample messages that were sent from high school and college students and teachers from around the world.

Read and enjoy!!

Brenda Yowell
bky@tenet.edu

INTERCULTURAL E-MAIL CLASSROOM CONNECTIONS

IECC is a LISTSERV that you can subscribe to (see attached information) or you can access data from it by using the TENET Gopher.

From TENET Main Menu, select
Internet Resources
Gopher--The TENET Gopher Information Server
The World/
All Gophers in World/
North America/
USA/
Minnesota/
St. Olaf College/

Internet Resources/
St. Olaf Sponsored Mailing Lists/
Intercultural Email Classroom Connections/
Archive.projects

(15 screens of sample projects)

Don't be afraid----easy to do!!

At end of project description, type *M* to mail it to yourself.

Subject: IECC Reminders and Update

Thank you all for your continued participation in the IECC and IECC-PROJECTS mailing lists. We now have over 1600 subscribers from 29 countries.

Just a couple of reminders:

**** Please direct e-mail PROJECTS to the "IECC-PROJECTS@STOLAF.EDU" lists and requests for PARTNER CLASSROOMS to "IECC@STOLAF.EDU" (Several participants have misdirected their postings; it causes delays and additional work if I have to re-direct such postings by hand... Thanks!)

**** Please use descriptive subjects in messages; it makes it much easier for our readers to decide if a message applys to them or their school if the subject contains something like:
"US 6th grade class seeking native Spanish Speakers"

**** To unsubscribe from the IECC list, send a message containing the word "unsubscribe" to:
iecc-request@stolaf.edu

**** To unsubscribe from the IECC-PROJECTS list, send a message containing the word "unsubscribe" to:
iecc-projects-request@stolaf.edu

ARCHIVE OF PAST POSTINGS

An archive of all postings to the IECC mailing list is available via Gopher and anonymous FTP.

Gopher:

St. Olaf's Gopher Server (gopher.stolaf.edu) is reachable by following your "Other Gophers and Information Servers" menu to:

North America
USA
Minnesota
St. Olaf College
Internet Resources
St. Olaf Sponsored Mailing Lists
Intercultural-Email-Classroom-Connections*
archive
archive.projects
archive.discussion

You may also search past IECC postings by keyword via Gopher. (The index is updated daily.)

FTP:

ftp.stolaf.edu:pub/iecc/archive
ftp.stolaf.edu:pub/iecc/archive.projects
ftp.stolaf.edu:pub/iecc/archive.discussion

WWW URL:

http://www.stolaf.edu/network/iecc.html

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ARMADILLO, THE TEXAS STUDIES GOPHER

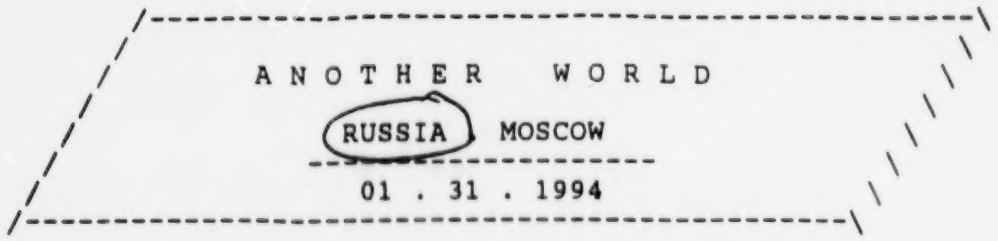
This gopher has lots of good information!

From the TENET Main Menu, select
Internet Resources
Gopher--The TENET Gopher Information Server
Educational Gophers
Miscellaneous
Armadillo, the Texas Studies Gopher/
Super Projects

(This would be a GOOD listserv to join!)

Another Place for Project Ideas

From the TENET Main Menu, select
Internet Resources
Gopher--The TENET Gopher Information Server/
Educational Gopher/
Miscellaneous/
Internet Classroom Ideas/
Internet Classroom Projects/



+++
+ 01.31.94 or 31.01.94 ? In Russia we write it so: 31.01.94. +
+ What about America? +
+++

Hello from Russia !

I tell you about my favorite film and song. I can not tell about one favorite film, because I like many films. Recently I have watched a film "Spaceballs". It is a comedy about the star wars and I like it very much. On the moment I can say that it is my favorite film.
I watch films at home, because if you whant to watch the film in the cinema (or to go to the concert), you must have a good deel of money.
I did not listen to Pink Floyd, but I like some songs of Nirvana. I don't like hard music. My favorite bands are: Roxette,Queen,I like Dire Staits and other .
---------- I whant to tell you about my school life.
Every day I get up at 8 o'clock in the morning and going to school. I have two matimatics lessons (two first lessons) every day. Between the lessons we have a little breaks, they are 10-15 minits long. On the third break we are having brakfast. Usually I have 6-7 (sometimes 8-9) lessons a day. I am learning English, but you can learn also German and French. After this main lessons we have subjects of Economic-mathematical education. For example: The marketing and market attitudes. Usually I come back at 7 o'clock in the evening. But don't think that I have not free time. I am fond of computers and so I can find a free time for this occupy. I often go to the Computer-center in our school (where computer with modem is standing). There are many interesting places in our school, but I can not tell you about all places. So my school life is very interesting.
I would like to know about your school life. Is your life interesting ? What are you doing after school ? Wich languages do you learn?
Do you learn Russian, if yes, write some words by Russian, please.
----------Hello Derrick Vann. I whant to exchange letters personally with you if your (and my) friends in America will not object. You can know about myself from our last letters, but I don't know nothing about you. Tell me about yourself, your family, hobbies.(Do you have a computer with modem ? I have 386/SX computer, but have not modem. I hope that soon we will buy modem). So I wait for your answer.
---------- I whant to aske you to write in your following letters, have you recived our letters, or not, because our modem is not very good. Your letter we recived with mistakes.
Our Video-center is make a film about our gimnesium. This film we will send to other schools and to you (I and my friends will be in this film only for you). Please write your school's mail address for this deel.

Your friend in RUSSIA

HIES!
Well drugs drugs...
uhmm is a terrible problem in our society... Chile
did u heard this before?
But I can tell u.. drugs is the problem of the humanity!
u can sign big problems in the world in all times
War,drugs and lawyers...
heheh kidding about lawyers *my sister is studying laws!)
but let's take a review.. do u remember Opium war? in China?
The always civilizated English invented this war .. they only
want to get money with opium and they didn't think in the
chinese ppl....
well.. that;s the same with cigars! tobacco is a drug! yes!
smoking is a stupid think.. putting smoke in ur lungs! and the
cigar is a drug.. yes the ppl became adict!
(alcohol is another legal drug!!!)
So.. why the society says.... HEY! go back! u are using drugs!
and then u see in TV ads saying.. DRINK WHISKEY!.. or...
smoke!
silly....
Well... I don't smoke.. and my favorite drink is Lemonade! hehe
well.. actually I drink one or two beers in a month...
but the problem is inside our society.. u can say.. HEY! in my
neighborhood u never will find drugs.. that means u don't know
the contacts!!!... REALLY!!.... I though a couple of years ago..
noo.. impossible in my university we haven't any drugs poblems!!!
But I was very very wrong....
is a serious trouble.. I agree with Kelly in this sense..
drugs is everywhere if u are looking for them!
But why could u need drugs?
I dunno.. I think ppl find a lot of reasons.. but no a real
and deep reason!!!... they are involved in the adiction and this
has no explanation!. If u say . HEY! I have control of myself..
and I can leave the drug when I want.... it's a sad lie.
u can't control it! that's the reason why the drugs are dangerous!
u loose ur freedom! absolutely
I think:
If u are looking for adventures.. new sensations another places
well.. just write!
dosen't matter if u write bad write for u!
u can create another worlds.. plenty of emotion...
u can build up a new world.. just for u a kind of refuge where u
will be the master if u want..
and if u think writing is bored.. then LOOK!
use ur eyes.. ur mind .. close ur eyes and imagine whatever u want...
and if u wanna fly... try this..
in the night ,go and get lying on the ground *grass if u can*
the look at the sky.. the sky full of stars.. suddenly
u start to fly!!! relly.. is amaizing
hehehehe
It's true.. I dunno why ppl look for fun in drugs.. they loose
verything..and the worst.. they loose themselves!
for ever..

.....
but the proposal was serious..
HIP HURRAY for DALLAS!
:)
hug for all of u!
AH! I sent to u a lot of post cards... and in other envelope
my photograph... heh scary scary!! BOOO!!! hehehehe
(it was a misstake.. u will understand why i say that)
I sent it to the official link Andrea.. one wekk ago (aprox.)
Enjoy the cards!

My name is Kathrin. I'm in the 10th grade at Bording school with Flemming, Thomas and all the others. We have been discussing sex roles in the English lessons. (English is, as you may know, our first foreign language taught at school. Our second is German, and in the 10th grade a few of us take French). Part of the work was a written assignment about hidden prejudice and discrimination in the labour market. This is what I wrote about the topic. I wonder if you know of this as a problem in the US? Or is there complete equality of sexes in all aspects?

A job for women! Denmark

Men and women! Two different sexes! Two different values?
This sentence was once believed in. From the very beginning of civilization women were only meant to stay at home taking care of the men. Hundreds of years since then this tradition has been followed up from generation to generation. While the men had a job the women's position was at home minding the children, taking care of the household, dinner, and everything that a family could require.

Because the women came in second row it was hard for them to rise above the sta time where the women could feel a little justice. They got the right to vote, the women's liberation appeared, and they started working in other places than at home. Thanks to all these people who played an important role in our history women have now got a more valued status in society. We don't only see them as carreer-women in demanding positions but also the relationship to men has changed. The so-called modern man helps at home and he even has some influence on the raising of his children.
All of this sounds alright and everything seems to be fair enough, but though we don't seem to notice there is still a lot of hidden prejudice about suitable jobs for women.
"Whatever women do they must do twice as well as men to be thought half as good". There is an awful lot of truth in these lines. We say that women are now able to get what we would characterize as a man's job, but if we do some research we see that the very top positions are very often occupied by men. If an employer has to choose between a man and a woman and even though they have equal qualifications he would probably choose the man.
This sounds absurd but there must be a reason why women are being treated with such injustice. If you employ a woman it may happen that she has to go on a maternity leave, but on the other hand if she has already got children she will not be as willing to work over-time as a man. This is why most employers ask female employees whatever they have or are planning to have children.
Then we ask ourselves that if the modern man is so helpful why can't he pick up the children from kindergarten or go on a maternity leave? Well, men don't do a thing like that, they never have and they probably never will. In my point of view this is a thing that will never change, and women will keep having to choose between success in a top position and having children.
We might as well realize that men and women aren't created equal, and we will never become equal, but that is not a thing that should stand in our way of being treated equally.

G'day, I'm Daniel, and I'm a true blue, dinki di, Australian.

In Australia we play a great deal of Football. Carlton unfortunately only came runners up to Essendon this year, but will have had sufficient practice to win next year. We also enjoy playing cricket. The Australian team are preparing to win the one day international world cup and have enough talent in the team to do so. However, I will not mention player's names because you won't know any of them. They may be famous here, but nobody else knows who on Earth they are. (eg. Shane Warne, Allan Border and most importantly, David "Boonie" Boon.) Tonight we are having a barbecue (my teacher has just told me to explain what a barbecue is. It is an outdoor griller with a flame lit underneath it.) with a few of the relatives. We will be eating sausages, and rissoles (home made hamburgers made with minced beef)

Here is a joke I love to tell to all my mates, over and over, until they drop dead from boredom.

"So, I walked into this pub (my teacher just told me again to explain what a pub is. It's a hotel with a bar where a lot of drunks hang around) one day, and I saw this guy and the guy had a dog and the dog had no legs, so I said to this guy, "What do you call your dog?" and he said, "Nothing, It wouldn't come anyway!"

How is life in Texas? You will have to write back to me and tell me some jokes and a bit about life over there.

Oh, and in your letter, can you also tell me what you think of pants being worn as a part of the school uniform by girls? Quite frankly, I think that it sounds rather ridiculous. They are all cutting their hair short, like boys, and dressing like boys too! What is the world coming to? Help us in Australia, free us of these silly ideas!

Hello!
We are here again! How are you? ItQs cold, there was a blizzard yesterday. We are wearing all the warm clothes. The most fashionable boots are high boots or low boots with buckles and laces. The trousers are either very narrow or very wide (slacks). Some girls wear long skirts with long splits. The GRUNGE is not very popular here. Boys wear suits or jeans (black or blue) and "tank boots". Short skirts are more popular than long ones. Almost everybody takes great care of oneQs appearance.

Do you know something about a serial called "Saved By The Bell"? It is most popular TV-serial in our country. We like very much the boys and girls there and the clothes they wear there. The other hot soap operas are "Paradise Beach" and "E-Street". Very many people, especially the housewives watch Mexican serials "Simply Maria" and "Wild Rose". The whole Russia is nuts about it. There are love and tears, love and tears, LOVE and tears, TEARS and love etc. And nothing else, not a single idea! These things make us laugh although many watchers cry seeing it. Do you like watching soap-operas?

Write us about the best pastime places in your town. Are there any restricts?

So, by for now! Many greetings. 16 Estonia

>
Wow... How many questions to answer... Only about the German schoolsystem you can write several books - but I'll try to answer them at least in brief.

The weather in Germany is in general probably a little bit colder than in Texas. We have most of the rain during spring and autum, summers can be verry hot and dry and the winters can be cold and snowy. Average tempreture during spring about 15c, in summer 25c, in autum 12c and in winter 0c.
The German school-system starts usualy with four years of Kindergarten, as far as I know this word is also used in Texas, after this four years you enter elementary school for another four years, where you learn basic things as writing easy calculation a little bit of biologie and so on. During the last year of elementary school youre parents and teachers decide, which will be youre future school. The lowest level is the 'Hauptschule', it takes five years and prepares you for simple professions like all kind of handycraft or lower jobs in trading. The next higher level of school is the 'Realschule', it takes six years and prepares for lowers jobs in banking busines, civil services, medical supliment and so on. The highest level are the 'Gymnasien' (singular: 'Gymnasium'), it takes nine more years of school and prepares you for University.

In all three school-types you have to learn at least one foreign language, normaly english, in the two higher educations you normaly learn two: english and french. In some schools their is also taught spanish, russian or also some more exotic languages like turkish or even japaneese. In most of the Gymnasiums (which can be compaired to you're highschools) you can also learn latin and/or old greek - how usefull ;)
After this brief introduction to the German school system you can probably specifie you're questions...
Some things about drugs: In Germany we have a drinking age requirement of 16 years. Bar's can be visited at 16 until 12.00 in the night and light alcoholic drinks (like beer) can be bought. For other drinks an to stay in bars later in the night the requirement is 18 Years. Driving drunk is punished depending on the quantity of alcohol you have in you're blood and the way how you drive. If you are caught by the police while driving drunk with more than 0.08 per cent alcohol in youre blood you're punished and up from 0.03 per cent alcohole you can be punished if you violence any driving rule. If you cause an accident while driving you are made responsible without limit up from 0.03 per cent (I hope you understand what I mean).
Drugs (appart from alcohole and nicotine) are generaly forbiden in Germany. The posession, the dealing and the use of druggs are persecuted. Even the posession of light druggs like marijuana or "shit" is a violation of the "German law about narcotics". The responsables about drug prevention in Germany are thinking about legalising marijuana. Their main argument is, that marijuana is a verry common or better popular drug among german youngsters. If we consider this drug illegal, they are thrown into criminality. If they are once criminal, the step to take harder drugs ore commiting other crimes is much smaler, than if we consider marijuana legal and start the persecution up from LSD or other harder drugs. I hope you can follow this argumentation - I think my english becomes worse from day to day.
The penalties for drug posession range from simple registration of the junkies up to five years of prison. But specially prison, in my opinion, can't be a solution, because as far as I know, there is nothing more simple than to buy drugs in a prison, but thats another topic...
The age for driving a car in Germany is 18.

So much for today, I'll write another letter this week, sorry, that it took so long to answer.

HELLO!
We are back from Christmas holidays and are very thrilled because we just got your package. Yes, it is right that "there are good days in Burleson". And you girls are really nice - that's what our only one boy, Ivar, said. We hope to send you a similar package very soon - we are waiting for our newspaper's new issue (our newspaper is quite different from yours).

As we were looking your picture with shirts and shorts we...prr...were very cold! It is cold inside our schoolhouse because the building is big and they don't have much money to heat it. So we're wearing some 2 sweaters and blouses and look like blue toddlers (our skin is blue-colored).

You asked about prostitution. No, it is not legal, but there are controversies in Parliament - to legalize or not. The state wants to get the taxes. We have no streetgirls. You can take callgirls' number from the newspaper and call them home or go there. If you wanna choose, ask some of them to come and all the free girls come. And if you don't like anybody thet go away. There are something like firms or clubs - they have securities and "presidents". There are boys and gays, too. It is large business in Estonia. It is good to my mind to legalize that!

Below is our brief history: Estonia

The Estonians are a Finno-Ugric people, their ancestors settled on the Baltic shores 7000 years ago. Roman historican Tacitus mentioned the Estonian in the first century AD. The lands of the Estonians were conquered in the 13th century by German and Danish invaders. This established 700 years of foreign rule over Estonia. During that time the country was ruled by the Livonian Order, Danish, Polish and Swedish kings and Russian czars. Russia won Estonia from Sweden in the Northern War in 1709. By this time there were big famines and plagues in Estonia and adding those wars and raids, it is almost unbelievable that we didn't become extinct.

Estonia was proclaimed an independent democratic republic on 24 February 1918. The freedom of Estonia was defended by people in a War of Independence. It ended with the signing of the Tartu peace treaty. In the period between the two World Wars Estonia, Latvia and Lituenia were independent states. The republic of Estonia was neither rich nor poor, but it had a stable economy, flourishing culture and a homogenous ethnic composition. In secret protocol of Nonagression Treaty between USSR and Nazi Germany in 1939, USSR is granted "sphere of influence" including Estonia. Soon afterwards the Soviets forced Estonia to sign mutual assistance pact and number of Soviet military bases were established on Estonian territory. Hours after a strongly-worded ultimatum from the Soviet government overwhelming Soviet forces invaded the country. The lawful government was ousted and a puppet government was installed. Estonia became 15th USSR republic (1940). 1941-1944 after German invasion of USSR, Estonia was controlled by Nazy Germany for three years, as part of Ostland province, including Belarus and Baltic states. 1944 Soviet forces regain territory. They launched a wave of repressions, immediatly began transforming the economy to conform with the Soviet model, expropriated big houses, business, land holdings, deported large numbers of Estonians to Russia, abducted over 10.000 people in just one act of deportion. The peasants were forced to join agricultural collectives, where productivity fell considerably. Reprisals continued against Estonian culture. The situation started changing in 1988, when the effects of Gorbachev's reform policy reached Estonia. Estonia is one of the first republics to declare independence from the USSR (Aug. 20 in 1991). Our President is Lennart Meri, Prime Minister is Mart Laar. The average age of ministers is 35.

Hope to hear from you soon!

Subject: goeie more van suid afrika af

I would like to write about South Africa.It is full of wild and dangerous animals.We are never sure if we will survive the day without getting eaten by the elephants or duikers.Even walking between classes is risky,and if someone doesn't arrive in class,we automatically presume him to have been eaten.Today my best friend was badly mauled by several impala and just two weeks ago my grandmother went swimming in a murky swimming pool and all that was found of her once the pool was emptied was a piece of her costume.They are still busy disecting the hippo.Darkest Africa is a really exciting place to live.
There are negative aspects to such an unusual country.Life insurance,for example,is impossible to come by,unless it excludes payouts for deaths by muggings,political violence,being eaten by animals or by savages (the latter is especially common).You think New York is bad with all its gangs and muggings?Wait till you see Grahamstown!
This letter was written to you from our local mission station on the towns only computer.Our only telephone is ringing in the background.Must be the London missionary society again.
I am one of the six literate people in the village and will soon be learning maths when our next missionary arrives from Britain.(our last one was eaten)
My father has a thriving business in the ivory trade and after several years of doing business with Japan has amassed sufficient funds to exchange a new Mercedes 560 sec and enough natives to pull the car and six passangers up a fairly steep hill for twelve cows.
We (Father,6 wives and 23 brothers) live in a large mud hut alongside a little stream just outside the village.We have 45 cows and 19 goats(as you have probably realised,my father is a very wealthy man)
Thank you for taking an interest in my country, and if anyone believes any part of this letter, please would they write back to me.(Ihope you realise that no part of this letter is true)
>From Ian Laing

Funny!

********** Dear Elicia Cook **********

Excuse me for do not answer early, I wasn't in Salamanca, I had to go to Mexico City. I am happy for your writting. I would like to tell you some -- good ideas to do everything easier.

1.- Your happiness don't have to depends on someone or something.
2.- You have to trust in God, He's going to give everything you need.
3.- You have to give good things everybody, giving is a way to be happy.
4.- You are not guilty if everything is wrong, you did not anything bad or wrong.
5.- Life is short and You have to enjoy while you're living.

Nice to answer you.

Mexico

Saludos Sergio Ledesma.

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Hello Teresa and Don

Hi, my name is Charlotte R. Bojer. I'm from Bording, Denmark. I'm16 years old, and I'm in the tenth grade.I live in a house with my mum and dad, my sister moved away from home 2 years ago. In my sparetime I play handball and visit my friends. My hobby is photo. I take photo lessons in the youth club. I take pictures of the nature, small kids, and something like that. I listen to all kinds of music, I have no favorite bands.
Since itos December, I want to tell you about my family's Christmas traditions. The days before X-mas are spent with baking, decorating the house, picking the X-mas tree and listening to X-mas songs.
On Xmas eve, we eat breakfast as on any other normal day. We don't have very much for lunch that day because we want to have a good appetite for the Christmas dinner.We eat roast duck with small brown potatoes,boiled potatoes, red cabbage and for desert we eat a kind of rice pudding with whipped cream and in the pudding we put an almond.The person who gets the almond gets a present.We make a lot of fun about it. Sometimes my dad picks a almond from the kitchen himself and then my grandmother canot understand why there're two almonds and only one present. If my grandfather gets the almond he always gives it to me. Christmas eve is a lot of fun here in Denmark.
Every Xmas we are at my grandmother and grandfather's. My grandmother and my mother prepare the dinner while I'm looking forward to all my presents, but there is not so much to look forward to, because I always know what I get. I usually open my presents before Xmas eve. I donot know who decorates the Christmas tree because itos already decorated when we arrive at my grandparentso house. Itos decorated with living candles and coloured globes of glass. My sister and I put the presents under the Christmas tree.When the dinner is ready we go to church. After that we eat for about 1-2 hours and then we dance around the tree while we sing about 6 carols. Finally we open our presents.
I spend about 1000 d.kr on Christmas presents for my family and my boyfriend.We are a very small family.I only have one cousin I know. I would like to hear something about your Christmas traditions in Texas. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Charlotte

This is our last lesson before Christmas, so I'll use this opportunity to send you a Christmas greeting: MERRY CHRISTMAS!
We've got quite much snow now. I would guess it's about 50 centimetres of snow, and -20 degrees (Celsius) is the lowest temerature until now. During Christmas I'll go out skiing; I haven't tried it since some time after Easter. I really look forward to that.
Today I've had a driving lesson, so now I have only two more lessons before I can get my driver's licence. I'll be very happy when I'm through. Here in Orkdal, a licence costs about 10 000 Norwegian crowns (one dollar is 7 crowns), which is very expensive. I'm trying to pay most of it myself and it ruins me...
I'll try to find out what different things cost, I believe you asked about that, so I'll try to send you a list after Christmas.
I'll try to write longer letters, too.

Norway

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MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OF YOU !

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MESSAGE LOG

DATE	RECEIVED FROM OR SENT TO:	MESSAGE SENT	MESSAGE RECEIVED
1.			
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QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR COMPUTER PALS:

1. What is the landscape like in your country?
2. What is the weather like in the different seasons?
3. How big is the town or city that you live in?
4. How many inhabitants are there in your city or town; in your state or country?
5. How big is your school and approximately how many students are in each class?
6. How many pupils are in your class that we are talking to?
7. What kind of subjects do you study?
8. Do you like your school? What are its good points and what are its bad points?
9. How is your school run?
10. Is your school a public or private school? Where does its funding come from?
11. Do you learn any other languages besides English at your school?
12. Do you have to pay anything to go to school?
13. What are you going to do after you have finished your education?
14. How many years left do you have at the school you are going to now?
15. Are you politically active or interested in politics?
16. What is the political system in your country like?
17. Is there much race discrimination in your country?
18. Do you think that your government is doing a good job governing your country?
19. Is environmental protection important for you and/or your country?
20. What is the common political view among young people in your country?
21. Do youths where you live have much to say when it comes to decisions made by the local school district? the local government? your state and/or country?
22. Is drug abuse a big problem among the youth?
23. Are there drug problems inside as well as outside of school?
24. What does your school do with drug offenders?
25. Is there much violence and crime in your school? in your city?
26. Is there much pollution in your country?
27. When asked about your country, what symbol or picture or animal, etc. comes to mind?
28. What is the best thing about your country?
29. What are the young people in your city and in your town doing in their leisure time?
30. What activities can the youth in your area do in their spare time?
31. Have you ever been to TEXAS?
32. What countries have you traveled to?
33. What are your hobbies?
34. What are the advantages of living in your country?
35. What are the disadvantages of living in your country?
36. What kind of music is most popular in your country right now? What singer? What singing group?
37. What are your TV programs about?
38. What kind of movies can you see at the cinema these days?
39. What is the average wage per hour in your country?
40. What do you do on the various holidays?
41. Are there any shopping malls where you live?
42. What do you do at parties?
43. At what age can you vote? drive a car? buy alcohol?
44. Tell about what a typical date is like in your country?

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